



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

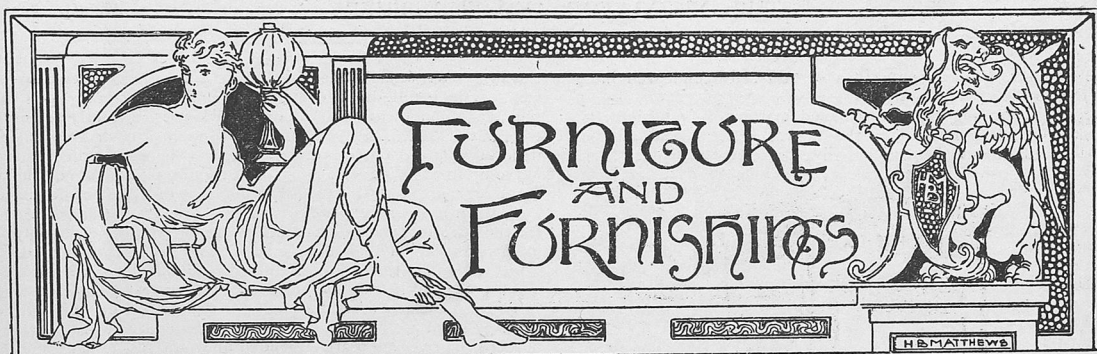
This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



WHY NOT A "WIGWAM" STYLE?

BY R. DAVIS BENN.



THE decorative artists and designers of the present day are fond of requisitioning the work of the past to provide them with inspiration, and almost every historic style has been made to yield its treasures by seekers after novelty. The great works of every time—from the Egyptian dynasties to the rule of Napoleon—have been studied and restudied, copied and re-copied, until it would almost seem as if the field of the past has been so thoroughly and incessantly cultivated that it must become barren, but it will be long ere that is the case. There is, however, one branch of historic ornament which has not been drawn upon nearly so much as it might have been, but which is, nevertheless, capable of successful utilization, and it is with that that I

propose to deal in a brief way. I refer to the decoration originated by savage tribes, though instead of following the traditional custom of styling it "Savage" ornament it seems

to me that "Primitive" is a more generous and altogether fitter term to employ in referring thereto.

Those who have studied the phase of decorative art referred to in the proper spirit cannot but have been struck with the wealth of skill and inventive genius it displays. If the nineteenth century designer wish to originate some new scheme he,

A
"WIGWAM"
EASY.

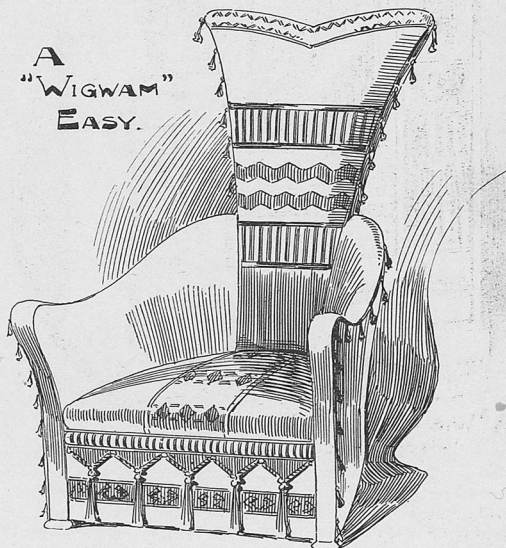


FIG. 2.

A
PADDLE
BACK
CHAIR

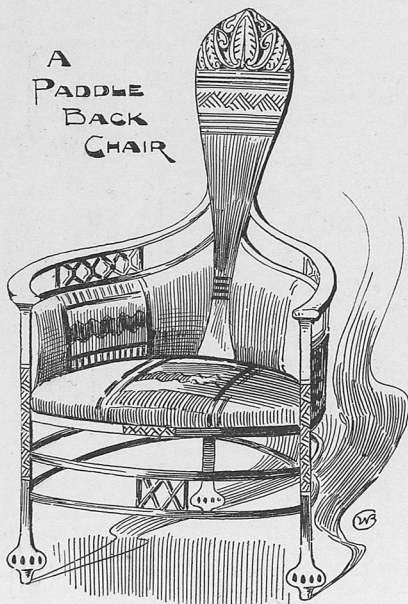


FIG. 1.

as likely as not, turns to his portfolios and art books and studies the work of those who have gone before until he is inspired with a fresh vein. But primitive man had no such facilities, and his work must be considered in the light of that fact. Whether primitive ornament is capable of application to articles of furniture intended to answer modern requirements may be very much a matter of taste, but I shall endeavor to show that the decoration of the tomahawk, the paddle and canoe may be adapted with success to forms suitable to find a place in the homes of to-day.

It is in recognition of the source from which the inspiration for the accompanying designs sprang that I have suggested designating them as in the "Wigwam" style, which, so far as I am aware, has never previously been employed. And why not? "Honor to whom honor is due" is an admirable maxim, and it is only fair that if we cull ideas from the productions of primitive tribes we should acknowledge their source, and the name of the home of the savage, the "Wigwam," suggests itself as the most suitable and characteristic one to adopt. And such a style should find special favor with the inhabitants of the New World, for it has been permitted to American writers to present the native of the prairie, the forest and the lake in a light which has filled his life with

the glamour of romance and in a certain sense endeared him to the people of all nations.

Notwithstanding the satirical and matter of fact pictures drawn by realistic writers, the figures which stand out in "Hiawatha" and Cooper's stirring romances will never lose

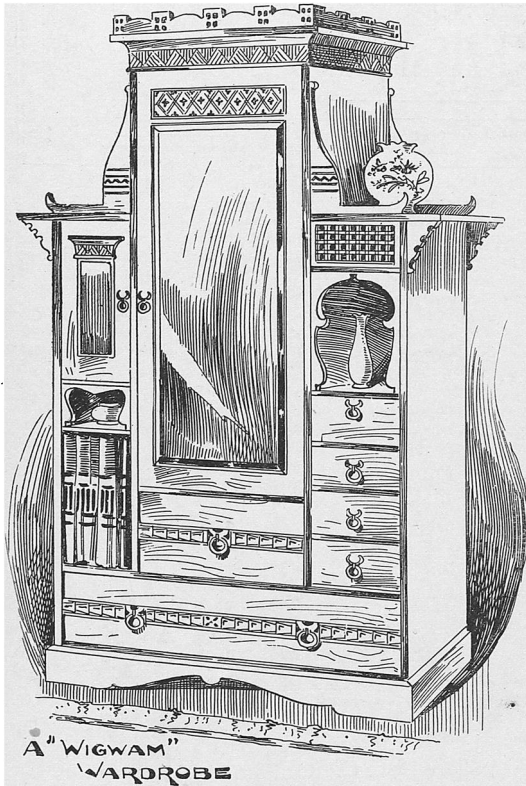


FIG. 3.

their interest—at least it is to be hoped not, for an appreciation of them reveals the existence of a love of innate nobility and beauty which is a hopeful sign wherever it be found.

In cultivating the "Wigwam" style the designer need not be trammelled by any strict or harassing rules so far as constructive form is concerned, and it is in the matter of detail that he must be most guided by the work of those whose creations he has in mind. It should, however, be observed that in planning the general lines of his work simplicity of parts should be adhered to as much as possible. The employment of elaborate moldings—or indeed moldings at all—is to be avoided, and any hackneyed element which would suggest modern mechanical production would not be in character with the ideas on which the style is founded. This being the case, the opportunities for the origination of striking novelties in the mode under consideration are not by any means few, and those who wish to get out of old ruts—agreeing with Carlyle's assertion that "Custom doth make dotards of us all"—will find plenty of scope in the cultivation of the field sown by primitive man. One important feature in connection with this old style in a new frame is that it permits of the introduction of color in a most effective way, a decided advantage. We are apt nowadays to allow our apartments to wear a too somber aspect, as a result of the employment of dark hardwoods with but very little to relieve their monotony, and any chance of successfully bringing in a judiciously planned color scheme should be taken full advantage of.

Let us consider the accompanying designs individually, and they will, I feel sure, justify the idea that there are possibili-

ties in a "Wigwam" style which have not hitherto been realized. The paddle-back chair, Fig. 1, gives in every point unmistakable indication of its origin, which is distinctly primitive, but it would, nevertheless, make up into a striking and decorative piece of furniture. The way in which the arms curve up to the back is suggestive of the prow of a canoe; the front legs are almost exact reproductions of clubs, while the back itself needs no explanation to elucidate its meaning. As for the covering, Indian matting would do admirably, or any other material having some such pattern as that indicated. Constructionally the design would offer no difficulties at all in making up, and it could be produced at a very reasonable cost.

The requirements of the bedroom are duly considered in Figs. 3, 4 and 5, in which comparative simplicity of form and purely primitive detail are depended upon for effect. The side pieces to the upper part of the center cupboard in the wardrobe, Fig. 3, are on the lines of paddles, and the carving introduced on the drawer-fronts and pediment is based on authentic examples handed down to us. In the dressing-table, Fig. 5, the legs are club-like in form, and the brackets supporting the glass are from a decorative type of tomahawk to be seen in most museums having a representative collection of such work.

As far as the dining-room is concerned, space will not permit me to multiply examples, but Fig. 6, a "Wigwam" sideboard, will show how carcase work for the apartment which is devoted to the pleasures of refreshing the inner man may be successfully treated. The drawing is sufficiently clear to make detailed description unnecessary, for the practical man will see at once the way in which the various parts should be handled. It will be noticed that in most cases carving is of a decidedly geometric character, and it will be well to study Indian or savage art as illustrated in the authentic examples of primitive carving to be seen on actual implements in our museums and elsewhere, preserved as characteristic specimens. The various simple but decorative carved borders are taken from the handles of axes and adzes and the other patterns from similar sources. Of course these may be elaborated in many ways,

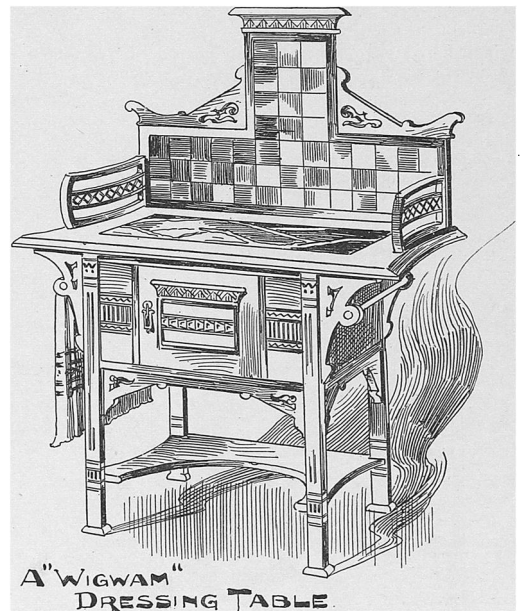


FIG. 4.

but in the interpretations accompanying these notes I have intentionally adhered as strictly to the original ideas as possible in order to show what may be done with the simplest elements.

Upholsterers may be interested in the piece of "Wigwam"

ELIZABETHAN INTERIORS.

BY FREDERICK PARSONS.



THE close of the sixteenth century of English history saw the nation enjoying an era of peace, progress and prosperity under the reign of a queen such as never has been eclipsed and is but paralleled by that of Victoria, these three hundred years later.

In the March issue of this magazine I ventured to touch, *en passant*, on the Elizabethan style as re-echoed in a modern artistic home. Herein I have been desired for a brief space to take old English interiors for a text; and one does so with a consciousness of the difficulties as well as of the pleasures of the task. So inexhaustible is the subject, so limited the present space and resources.

To the modern man of commerce, to whom the table in his dining-room possesses no greater interest than the daily bread he enjoys thereon, old English furniture and decorations may have little present interest. Happily, one appeals in these pages to an ever-widening circle of readers, to whom the reign of Elizabeth redounds to the glory of their sex, and whose interest in the beautiful old mansions of her contemporary times one feels to be already assured.

To appreciate all that is implied by the "Elizabethan" in art and architecture we must glance over some outlines of history. From the twelfth to the close of the first half of the sixteenth centuries we find English history written boldly in the magnificent Gothic churches and cathedrals of her truly national religion.

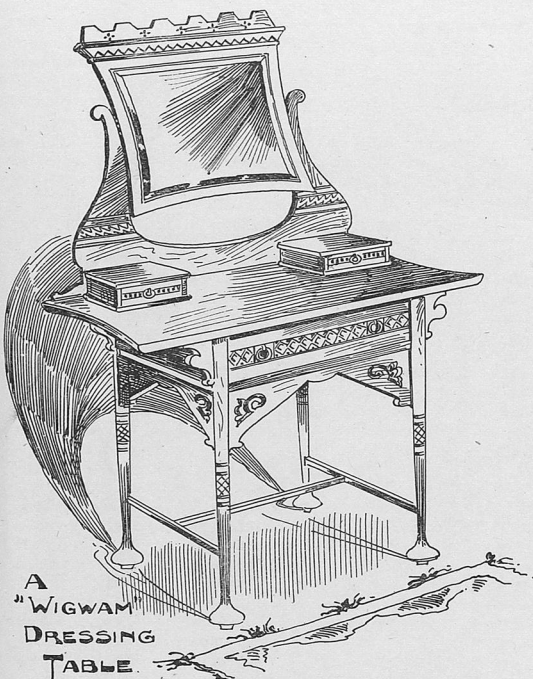


FIG. 5.

stuffover work drawn in Fig. 6, which is suggestive in a fresh direction. Upholstered work does not, however, lend itself so well to the style under consideration as woodwork pure and simple, although it is amenable to treatment on "Wigwam" lines with a certain amount of success.

The foregoing reflections and designs will, I think, go to prove that the question "Why not a 'Wigwam' style?" is not outside the bounds of reason, either from a commercial or an artistic point of view, and they have not by any means exhausted the question. In fact they are intended more as introductory than anything else, and their application and development may be left in the hands of those designers who study the pages of this journal.

DECORATIVE NOTES.

THE most attractive feature of a drawing-room is a fireplace of Caen stone, cut in the face of which is the nude figure of a dancing girl.

A GUEST chamber has the walls covered with rose-colored silk in harmony with the furniture of inlaid rosewood. Here has penetrated the spirit of antiquity as shown in the bed-spread of heavily embroidered white silk, made from the vestments of an old Portuguese priest. A characteristic feature is that of the gas brackets, which are of porcelain.

OF the numerous varieties of stained-glass work, none are more effective than fire-screens. One in particular is worthy of special mention, as being composed entirely of red glass of different shades. The fire itself has been taken for the motive, and the lead lines suggest the general flames' lines with tips of bronze. The center is circular, framed in bronze, and bears a salamander modeled in glass. The play of light and shade over the face of the screen is extremely artistic. Among other fire-screens is one entitled Cinderella, in which the drawing is particularly good and the colors especially harmonious. It may be described as a blonde-haired figure of a young girl sitting upon the hearth in a pensive attitude, the background being a pale blue. The screens are mounted in brass. Plain screens are exhibited composed simply of panes.

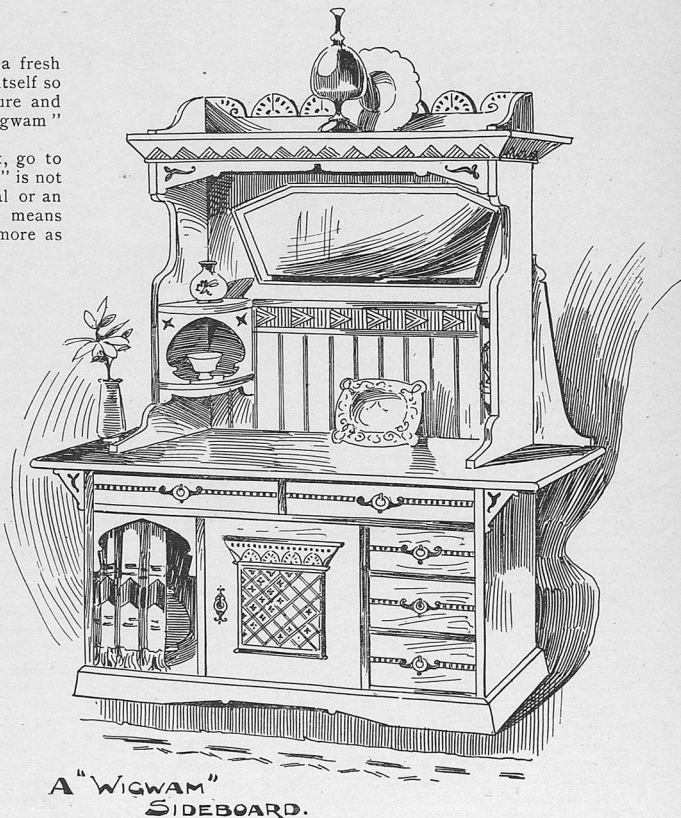


FIG. 6.